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THE

HISTORY

OF THE

HAVERAL WIVES;

OR, THE

FOLLY OF WITLESS WOMEN DISPLAYED.

WRITTEN BY

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The Claſhing Wives Clerk.

BEING A COMICAL CONFERENCE BETWEEN

MAGGY AND JANET,

HIS TWO OLD AUNTIES.

Entered According to Order, [illegible]

The History of the Haveral Wives, &c.

IT is a certain old ſaying, that where women are convened in crouds there can be but little ſilence: and ſome have acknowledged that it was a great bondage for them to hold their peace in the church; and when there is much talk by ignorant ſpeakers it is diverting for perſons of underſtanding to hear them. Therefore we have furniſhed the public with a ſmall collection of old wive's noted ſayings and wonders, which they relate had happened in their own time; alſo, what has been told them by their forefathers.

Two old wivse, Maggy and Janet, at their rocks, began their crack as follows.

Janet A dear Maggy, how auld will ye be now? O it's lang ſince I kend ye.

Maggy. Indeed Janet that's what naebody kens, for my father and mother had ſae mony o' us they ne'er counted how auld ane o' us was, they minded ay wha o' us was born firſt; and wha was neiſt ane anither, and that was a' that e'er we ſought to ken about it; but I ha'e mind o' the mirk Munanday.

Jan. Hout toutt, woman, the mirk Munanday! I mind ſince there was nae Munandays at a', and Sabbath days was nae come in faſhion; there was a day they ca'd Sunday came ance i' the ouk for it; we ken'd day when it came, for my father cow'd ay his beard when the bell rang, and then every body ran to the kirk that had ony thing to do, gin it were to buy ſaut or ſhune, for the chapman chields ſet up a' their creims at the kirk-door, and the laſſes wad a gotten keeking glaſſes, wee thoobs, needlesprins, elſhinirons, whiſtles, brown bread and black ſaep, forby ſweety wives things, and rattles for reſtleſs little anes; the men wad a bought pints o' ale and gotten a wang o' gude cheeſe to chew i' the time o' drinking o't. Ay, ay, there was braw markets on Sunday i' the time o' popery, we had nae mi-

a'fter then, but prieſts, meſs Johns, black friars, white friars, monks, abbots and biſhops; they had nae wives, yet the beſt o' them wad a' ſpoken bawdy language and kiſs'd the laſſes; fickle fykin bodies they were, unco ill to pleaſe; they wad baith curs'd folk and bleſs'd them juſt as ye paid them: a deed they were unco greedy o' the penny, and prayed ay to the dead-folk and gard the living pay them for't; and tho' they had play'd the loon wi' a poor hizzy ſhe durſt nae ſpeak o't for her very life, for they could gi'e ony body o'er to the de'il when they liket. They didna gar folk learn to read and pray like our new miniſters, thump on your breaſt, ſtrike your fingers o'er aboon your noſe, tell your beads and rin barfit amang hard ſtanes and cauld ſnaw.

Mag. Hech woman! and wad they had carnal dealings wi' the women, and them ſae good and haly.

Jan. Hout, ye daft gowk! do ye think their gudeneſs gelded them tho' they had nae wives? There was a great ſort o' them they ca'd cardinals, that ay when twa young bodies were married they bit to ha'e the firſt night o' the bride.

Mag. Wae worth the filthy hoorin dogs, if I wadna libbet them myſel'; I wonder that the gentle folk and lairds lut them do the like o' that.

Jan. A dear woman! the gentle folks and the lairds kept ay in wi' them, for they ſaid they had the command o' the de'il and the dead folk, and the gentles durſtna caſt out wi' them, for they got a' their ſins pardoned for the leſs ſiller.

Mag. A wow woman? What's come o' them a' now? I'm ſure the like o' thae folk that had ſae muckle power need neither die nor yet be ſick; they wad live a' their days,

Jan. A wat well did they, for the maiſt o' them is dead and rotten, and the reſt o' them gaed awa' to Italy, where the auld Pope their father, the de'il, the witches, brownies and fairies dwall; and then we gat anither ſort o' goſpel folk they ca'd curits, a fine ſort o' dainty bonny bodies they were, but gay and greedy; they didna like

[illegible] wark, but ſays as muckle againſt it, for a hantle bits o' callans was a gotten twa or three baſtards before they had gotton breeks ; they bid to ha'e tiths of every thing that grew mony time my father wiſt they wad take tiths o' his hemp too, if it were to hang themſelves. They were ay warſt whare a poor man or wife died, though they left weans fatherleſs and motherleſs ; deed they wad ſent their bellman, and wi' his lang prelatic fingers he wad harled the upper pair o' blankets aff the poor things beds for ſome rent they gard folk pay for dying ſae did they een ; and yet they kept a hantle braw haly days, when we got our weims fu' o' fat broſe, and ſuppit Yule ſowns till our ſarks had been like to rive : and after that, eaten roaſted cheeſe and white puddings well ſpiced, o' braw tinſes for the guts ! Well I wat ony body might live then that has any thing to live on.

Mag. But dear Janet, ye're braw and lang o' the memory, do ye mind o' the waeſu' blaſt when the foul thief was raging in the air, and the de'il dang down a' the kail-yard dykes, cutted the corn ſtack, tirr'd the houſes, and blew giddy Willy's wig in the wall ? They ſaid it was ſome young miniſter that had rais'd the de'il, and for want o' a cock, a cat, or ſome unkirſen'd creature to gi'e him, they cou'dna get him laid again. as he brake the bridle, ſlipped his head, and ran frae them.

Jan. A deed woman I heard tell o' that and how wood Willy M'Neil met him on the ſtaps i' the mids o' the water and ſhot him o'er and thought to drown him, but he gaed down the water like a meikle branded bull going down the water a' burning fire. But I mind the firſt time the de'il came to this country was on a Sunday : I was a wee bit young laſſie ; my father and a' the men folk was at the kirk, there was twa o' them, a humel'd ane and a horn'd ane, a gudeman de'il and a gudewife de'il as we took them to be, we ran a' into the houſe and my mither barr'd the door and hunted the dogs out at the byre-hole thinking the de'il wad rin frae the dogs ; but na na, they gat upon their tae end like twa auld men ; they were a' rough lang hair'd like a pyet horſe, wi' lang beards aneath their chin, and the muckle horn'd de'il [illegible] at the hallan [illegible]; we ran a' ben the houſe and grat, but our Jock, wha was a little gabby laddie, cried, my mither, mither, what is the de'il ſeeking here? he'll be wantin' to take auld wives and the cats to make witches o' them. I trow when my grandmither heard that ſhe gat up and ran ben the houſe and crap into the bearmeal barrel to hide herſel' frae them, and ſtay'd there till the kirk ſkail'd; ſhe was ſae fear'd that ſhe made her burn in the barrel; and what was't after a' but a tupe and a ewe o' highland gaits the laird got to gi'e the lady milk; but mony a day we laugh at the twa de'ils.

Mag. But dear woman, what an a body is that de'il that ilka body is ſae fear'd for him? is na him they ca' auld Nick? what for do they ca' him auld Nick?

Jan. Deed woman I dinna ken what like a body he is, but they ſay that he is black, and they ca' him auld Nick becauſe he is aulder than Adam, and Adam was the firſt man in the warld, and they ſay the de'il will ne'er die, nor yet be ſick, nor ha'e fair een.

Mag. A wow Janet, but ye're a witty creature! but can ye tell me what way the Blackamoors is made? ſome folk ſays they are dipped in cats blood and burnt wi' heat ſtrae, but I'm thinking the liker folk's dipt them in amang the broe that they lit the black claith wi', and then ſells them to the lairds and gentle folks to fley their bairns wi'; or do ye think the gentles eats them?

Jan. Hout awa', daft creature! the Blackamoors is folk juſt like ourſel', only they ha'e black ſkins on them. Did ye never ſee black ſheep and white ſheep, black horſe and white horſe? ye think they're a' de'ils becauſe the de'il is black: I thought lang ſyne they were made for the penny, and ſell'd the better o' the black ſkin.

Mag. But Janet did ye e'er ſee the de'il? I wad fain ken what like he is: ſome ſays he is like a bull, a bear, or an auld begger man.

Jan. Indeed I never ſaw the de'il a' my days, but I've heard the miniſters miſcaing him, and when they ſaid a' they could ſay o' him, they ca'd him an ill ſpirit, and a

great liar; mony ane has war names than a' that yet.

Mag. But do ye think there is ony de'ils but ane? every body is ſpeaking and crying on him, an he coud'na anſwer them a'.

Jan. Indeed they ſay there's black anes and white anes o' them, humel anes and horn'd anes, the very witches is ha'f de'ils whan they're living and hale anes whan they're dead; the brownies in ha'f dogs ha'f de'ils, a' rough but the mouth, ſeeks nae claiſe, ae man's meat will ſair them and they'll do ten mens wark in ae night; for hobgoblins, fairies and elfs, that ſhoots folks beaſts to dead, and no hole to be ſeen in the ſkin o' them. Hard ye no tell o' the twa Highland wives? how the tane cried, ochon, Shenet, my cow is ſhot! Hech, quo' ſhe, wha ſhot her? Deed it was the de'il. Och, Shenet, we'll a' be ſhot whan the de'il has gotten a gun.

Mag. Sweet be wi' us woman! it's an unco thing they dinna flee on the miniſter whan he flytes and miſcas them ſae, do ye think they hear him?

Jan. Ay they hear and ſee too, they are neither blind nor bleer'd; but ay whan ye ſpeak o' them name the day, ſay it's Wedenſday thro' a' the warld and there's nae fear o' you.

Mag. What do you think o' your miniſter; is he a gude man think ye?

Jan. Indeed I think he is a gay gabby body, but he ha' twa fauts and his wife has three; he's unco greedy o' ſiller, and preaching down pride and up charity, and yet he's that fu' o' pride himſel' that he has gotton a glaſs winnock on ilka ſide o' his noſe, and his een is as clear as twa clocks to luk to, he has twa gilly gawkies o' dochters, wha come to the kirk wi' their cobiethow mutches frizled up as braid as their hips and clear things like ſtars about their necks, and at ilka lug a wallopin white thing hinging like a ſnotter at a bubly wean's noſe, ſyne about their necks a bit thin claith like a mouſe web, and their twa bits o' paps ay playing nidity nod, ſhining thro' it like twa yearning bags, ſhame fa' them and their fligmagaries baith, for I get nae gude o' the preaching

looking at them, and a' the ſhairny bought hizzies in the pariſh maun ha'e the like or lang gae; but an' I ware to preach ſic pride ſudna ha'e baith peace and proſperity in my pariſh, I wad point my finger at them i' the kirk and name them baith name and ſirname, and ſay, there ſits ſhairney Meg o' the mill, ſtumpy May o' the moſs, ſniveling Kate wi' her hodle makenſter coat; they come into the kirk, bobbing their hint quarters like water wag tails, ſhaking their heads like a hunder pund horſe, ſmaking their lips and hading their mouth like May puddocks and what ſhall I compare them to? painted Jezebels, the whore of Babylon, Rachael the harlot, wi' a' their gaudy decoying colours high taps, and ſpread glittering tails when they come into the houſe of prayer, as it were a houſe of dancing and deboſhery. Gae ye painted peeſewips, to fairs or waddins, and there diſplay your proud banners o' pride; but if the gillie gawkies ſhould come into the kirk wi' their heels up and their heads down our Meſs John is like ane o' the dogs of Egypt, he wou'd na move his tongue, and I believe he darna for clippock his wife, whaſe element is to banter a' the poor folk frae her door: ſhe caſts a' her cauld porrich and kail to the cocks and hens, kicks the poor colly dogs out at the door: ca's them filthy uſeleſs brutes becauſe they canna lay eggs like hens eggs, ſhe is ay flyting on the ſervant laſſes, hungers her ſervant lad, and gars the poor miniſter eat ſalt herring.

Mag. Weel I wat then I wiſh he minna turn a drunken body for herrin makes folk dry. But now Janet, ye ha'e teld their fauts on baith ſides, and I ha'e a great faut to our miniſter yet, and tho' I were dead and rotten the night before the morn I'll neither forgi'e nor forget him for what he did to me, he ſaid I ſhould be ta'en and douked for offrin to marry again, or ony woman at my age. And now, Janet, I am no to ca' very auld yet; although I be ſtricken in years I dinna ken my ain age, being chriſtened i' the time o' papery; but I ha'e the penny tho' bare o' fleſh and blude, and ha'e four good teeth afore and weel willing gumes i' the back ſide. I canna gang very far without a ſtaff and yet I wad as fain be married as whan I was fifteen year auld ; O ! but a man in the man be an uſefu' body, they ha'e a ſweet breath an a natural heat to keep a body warm ; but an our miniſter war an auld wife he wad ken what the want o' a bit man is as weel as I. And a' this began about wanton Watt the town taylor, wha promiſed to tak me agen ſic a time or tell me whatfore ; mony a puckle weel butter'd kail blades I gied him hert out o' my ain weim and ſtapit in a' his, he ſaid he wad do as meikle to me agen, but he haſna done it ; fa'ſe lown carle it he was, cheated me out of ſax pund and twa ſarks, and then gart me mak a fool o' myſel' when the laird's douket was bigget and made a' white to gar the dows come, he ſaid an my window war white they wad come to me too, and I like a poor fool took a baſon fu' o' gude bear meal and made it into drammock and whiten'd a' my window with it, but the never a dow came near me the mair o't, but a' the town dogs came licking and picking at it night and day ; I was plagued wi' them till a gude ſhower came and waſht it awa again, and the laird and every ane came to look and laugh at it.

Humphrey Clinker entering and hearing a' that paſs'd perſuades his aunt Maggy that no man would marry ſuch as her, for ſhe looked like the picture of death riding on hunger's back for want o' teeth to chew bread for the nouriſhment of the body, and that he was come to write her teſtament, ſo ſhe muſt go to bed and die directly.

10 JU 62

When Maggy and Janet had fairly done,
With their claſhes from their tongue,
They went and birl'd their baubees,
They claſh'd and told all downright lies.
Now Janet and Maggy did agree
Never to drink one drop of tea,
But ſtout brown ale and whiſky bare,
And they ſhook hands and came away.

FINIS.